

# **STATE OF MARYLAND JUDICIARY**

## **Policy on Grants Administration**

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### **I. PURPOSE**

To establish a uniform policy governing the administration of funds awarded and received by the Maryland Judiciary.

### **II. SCOPE**

This policy applies to all courts, court-related agencies, and departments within the Maryland Judiciary.

### **III. GRANTS AWARDED BY THE JUDICIARY**

#### **A. DEFINITIONS**

1. Budget - The categories and amounts approved by the grant-awarding department when it awards a grant.
2. Budget Modification - A revised budget approved by the grant-awarding department.
3. Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) - A database of all Federal programs available to State and local governments (including the District of Columbia); Federally-recognized Indian tribal governments; territories (and possessions) of the United States; domestic public, quasi-public, and private profit and nonprofit organizations and institutions; specialized groups; and individuals.
4. Change of Purpose - An activity or goal that fits within the objectives of a grant but was not approved by the grant-awarding department at the time of the award.
5. Conflict of Interest - The inability of an individual or organization (e.g., a bidder, offeror, contractor, consultant, or subcontractor or subconsultant at any tier) to render impartial assistance or advice to the State, or an unfair competitive advantage in performing work under a contract because of other activities or relationships with other persons.

6. Debarment - Exclusion from participating in government contracting or government-approved subcontracting for a reasonable, specified period of time.
7. Department of Budget and Finance - The Department within the Maryland Judiciary responsible for disbursing grant funds and recording expenditures.
- 8. Drawdown Schedule – A schedule of payments based on percentages of the grant award usually distributed on a quarterly basis.**
9. Fiscal Agent - The name, address, and Federal ID# of the person or entity to whom payments are to be made, if different from the grant recipient, and the address to which the payment is to be mailed, as designated by the grant recipient.
10. Funding Period - The time period in which a grant recipient must obligate and/or expend grant funds.
11. Grant - A defined amount of money that is awarded to a court, court-related agency, state or local government agency, state institution (such as a university), community organization, or not-for-profit organization.
12. Grant Review Committee - An advisory group convened by a grant-awarding department to assist it in developing and administering effective grant programs that comply with Judiciary policies and procedures, review grant applications, and recommend proposed projects for funding that comply with the department's and the Judiciary's goals and objectives.
13. Grant-awarding Department - A department within the Judiciary that awards grants. This may be any department that has funding and is pre-approved by the Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals or the State Court Administrator to develop programs or services consistent with the department's mission through grants.
14. Grant-awarding Department Guidelines - The guidelines developed by each grant-awarding department that implement the Judiciary Policy on Grants Administration and provide specific information to potential grantees about the types of grants and application processes.
15. Grant-awarding Official - The director or his/her designee within a unit of the Judiciary that is approved by the Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals or the State Court Administrator to award grants.
16. Grantee - The official and/or an organization authorized to apply for and accept grant funds from the Judiciary.

17. Indirect Costs - Costs of an organization that are not readily assignable to a particular project, but may be necessary to the operation of the organization and the performance of the project. Indirect costs should not be included in the budget without prior written approval from the grant-awarding department.
18. Judiciary Grants Coordinator - The official within the Court Research and Development Department designated by the Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals to provide technical assistance to grant-awarding departments and assure that all grant-awarding activities follow Judiciary grant policies.
19. Key Program Personnel – Individuals in grant-funded management positions who guide grant projects and make decisions about major activities and expenditures.
20. Match - A portion of the costs of a project contributed by the grantee. Match may include cash and in-kind services. Cash match is the direct outlay of funds by the grantee or a third party to support the project. Examples include the dedication of funds to hire a new employee or purchase new equipment to carry out the project. In-kind match consists of contributions of time and/or services of current staff members, space, supplies, etc., made to the project by the grantee or others working directly on the project.
21. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) - A written agreement that defines the deliverables, payments, and roles and responsibilities of the parties in the conduct of efforts of mutual interest.
22. No-cost Extension - An approved amount of time added to a funding period by the grant-awarding department during which a grantee may obligate and/or expend remaining grant funds.
23. Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) - The official announcement to potential grantees that grant funding is available.
24. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circulars - Instructions or information issued by OMB to Federal agencies. Most OMB circulars are available on line at [www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars).
25. Unspent Grant Funds - Funds that were not spent within the funding period.

## **B. POLICY STATEMENT – GRANTS AWARDED BY THE JUDICIARY**

This policy governs all grants awarded by the Judiciary. The Judiciary uses grants to enhance and evaluate the services available to its constituents.

The Judiciary awards four types of grants:

- Sustaining grants – Capacity-building grants to support programs operated by courts and not-for-profit and other organizations to provide specialized services that enhance the services to court constituents. Examples include Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) programs, grants to create or enhance problem-solving courts, jurisdictional grants to support family service programs, etc.
- Pilot project grants – One-time start-up grants awarded to test and evaluate the effectiveness of a particular approach or program intended to enhance the services available to court constituents
- Non-renewable grants - Grants to not-for-profit organizations, other organizations, and government agencies to provide specialized services that enhance the assistance available to court constituents. Examples include funding for one-time services or equipment purchases; grants for time-limited programs or services, such as hosting a conference, providing services for litigants or victims; etc.
- Mini-grants – Grants of \$2500.00 or less. Awards can be made by the grant-awarding official, without being reviewed by the grant review committee. The grant-awarding official must report on these awards at the next regular meeting of the grant review committee.

In addition to the four types of grants, the Judiciary awards funding to other State and local government agencies using Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs). Examples include MOUs with universities for research or training initiatives and MOUs with local courts to purchase equipment.

### **1. Responsibilities of the Grant-awarding Department**

- a. Guidelines – The grant-awarding department shall develop guidelines to implement the Judiciary Policy on Grants Administration. The grant-awarding department's guidelines must comply with this Policy, but may be more restrictive and tailored to the type of grant.
- b. Notification of Grant Funding
  - (1) Competitive Grants – Competitive grant programs shall be announced through a Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA). The grant-awarding department shall issue grant guidelines or NOFAs

that describe the overall goals and objectives of its grant programs, and application instructions and deadlines. The guidelines and NOFAs for competitive grant programs shall be published in the *Maryland Register* and posted on the grant-awarding department's page on the Judiciary's website ([www.mdcourts.gov](http://www.mdcourts.gov)).

- (2) Non-competitive Grants – The grant-awarding department shall issue grant guidelines for notifying potential grantees of processes for requesting funds for non-competitive grants (e.g., unsolicited special project grants, one-time equipment grants, mini-grants, etc.) These guidelines shall be published on the grant-awarding department's page on the Judiciary's website.

The notifications and/or grant guidelines shall address:

- Eligibility criteria for application
- Application instructions and deadlines
- Budget categories: Allowable direct costs
- Budget category: Indirect costs
- Funding period
- Schedule of grant fund disbursements
- Matching requirements (if any)
- Program reporting requirements
- Financial reporting requirements
- Statistical reporting requirements (if required)
- Reporting formats
- Advisements
  - Acknowledgement of funding
  - Audit
  - Budget modification procedures
  - Change of purpose
  - Debarment
  - Fee collection (if authorized by law)
  - Grant extensions
  - New positions and programs
  - No-cost extensions
  - Personnel and payroll records
  - Written procurement policy/requirements
  - Reconciliation
  - Right to withhold funds or change funding amounts based on availability of funds, or non-performance
  - Source of funding and additional compliance requirements, if appropriate (e.g., subgrant of Federal funds, Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance [CFDA] number, requirement to follow OMB circulars)

The grant-awarding department's guidelines shall advise circuit courts seeking grants that they must follow their respective counties' written procurement and personnel policies. The grant awarding department's guidelines shall require non-profit organizations to define their competitive procurement and personnel policies in their grant applications. The grant-awarding department shall advise grantees that do not have an established written procurement policy that they must use the lowest of three written bids/proposals for goods or services to be purchased with grant funds.

The grant-awarding department's guidelines shall advise potential grantees that by accepting a Judiciary grant, the grantee agrees to cooperate with Judiciary-sponsored evaluation projects.

The grant-awarding department shall advise potential grantees that acceptance of the grant automatically gives any authorized representative of the Judiciary's Internal Audit Department access to and the right to examine all records, papers, books, and documents related to a Judiciary grant.

As needed, the grant-awarding department shall provide technical assistance to potential applicants on project development and grant submission requirements.

The grant-awarding department's guidelines shall stipulate that the District Court and circuit courts may not request funds to support indirect costs. Depending on the type of program and nature of the project, the grant-awarding department may support indirect costs requested by non-profit organizations and institutions of higher education (e.g., universities), with appropriate justification. In this regard, however, the grant-awarding department's guidelines shall limit the amount of indirect costs to no more than ten percent (10%) of the amount requested from the grant-awarding department.

c. Review and Award Process

Grant Review Committee - The grant-awarding department shall establish a grant review committee to:

- Assist in identifying the need for projects to be funded by the Judiciary;
- Advise the department on grant-awarding and application review procedures;
- Review grant applications and make funding recommendations to the grant-awarding official; and

- Assist the grant-awarding department in meeting its fiduciary duty to spend public funds in a fiscally prudent and productive manner.

The Judiciary Grants Coordinator or designee shall be a non-voting member of the grant review committee established by the grant-awarding department. The Judiciary's Internal Audit Department shall serve in an advisory capacity to the grant review committee. The grant-awarding department may determine the composition of the remainder of the committee, its meeting schedule, and the criteria the committee uses to review proposals. The department shall develop written guidelines that govern the committee's composition and functions, subject to review and approval by the Judiciary Grants Coordinator.

Grant review committee members shall not benefit financially from any Judiciary grant-funded project. They may not serve as paid consultants or trainers to a grantee, nor may they bid on any grant-funded projects after they have been awarded.

Committee members are responsible for identifying and disclosing any possible or apparent conflicts of interest that may arise during the grant review process. Committee members may not participate in any grant review processes if doing so might create (the appearance of) a conflict of interest.

As part of its review, the grant review committee shall evaluate applicants' written procurement and personnel policies to ensure they promote the efficient and responsible use of grant funds.

- d. Award Notification and Project Commencement Process - The Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals, or his designee, shall sign all letters to grantees notifying them of the grant amount that has been awarded. The designation authorizing someone other than the Chief Judge to sign grant award notifications shall be in writing, and the grant-awarding department shall maintain a copy of the designation on file for audit purposes.

The grant-awarding department then shall send two copies of a grant agreement letter to the grantee. The grant agreement letter shall specify the funding period. The authorized official from the grantee agency must sign both copies of the agreement and return one signed original to the grant-awarding official. No grant funds may be issued until this signed copy of the agreement is received.

The grant-awarding department shall notify its grantees in writing that funds may not be used for any purpose or activities other than those

stated in the approved grant application unless a written change of purpose request is submitted and approved by the grant-awarding official.

The grant-awarding department also shall require its grantees to inform it within 15 days of any changes in key program personnel, program name, address or other contact information.

- e. Accounting Requirements and Audits - The grant-awarding department shall require recipients to maintain full and accurate records of all financial transactions and accounts related to the grant-funded project for a minimum of three years after the grant period ends and until audited, including requests for payment and receipts for expenses incurred, and time sheets for any salaries paid for with grant funds. The grant-awarding department shall explain that these records must be available for review by the Judiciary (personnel from the grant-awarding department, the Judiciary Grants Coordinator and/or the Internal Audit Department) at any time.
- f. Personnel and Payroll Records - The grant-awarding department shall require its grantees to follow their respective organizations' payroll, personnel, and time and attendance procedures for each position supported by Judiciary grants. This requirement shall be provided to the grantees in writing.
- g. Procurement - The grant-awarding department shall require grantees to follow their respective county government's or organizations' written procurement policies in expending grant funds and maintain documentation demonstrating such compliance for all single purchases greater than \$2,500.00.

Upon receipt of goods and/or services, ownership and liability shall transfer to the grantee, and the grantee shall assume responsibility for all routine equipment maintenance and/or replacement costs.

The grant-awarding department may require grantees that intend to use Judiciary grant funds for contractual services to notify potential contractors that funds for the project originated from the Judiciary. The grant-awarding department may provide technical assistance for development of Requests For Proposals, help identify potential contractors, and develop interview questions. The grant-awarding department shall not participate in interviews or the selection process for contractors or vendors. Guidelines of the grant-awarding department shall address these issues as appropriate.

All procurement actions shall be subject to Judiciary and Legislative Audit review.



- h. Fees - If authorized by law, individual litigants may be levied a fee for services provided by or through a grant-awarding department. The grant-awarding department's guidelines shall define the fee collection and accounting procedures.
- i. Match - The grant-awarding department may require a cash or in-kind match for grants. The requirements for such a match must be defined in the grant-awarding department's grant application guidelines.
- j. Acknowledgement of Support - The grant-awarding department may require grantees to acknowledge the support of the Judiciary on published materials or products created as part of the grant-funded project. The specific wording, such as "produced with support from the Maryland Judiciary," and the requirements for its use shall be defined in the grant application guidelines.
- k. Fund Disbursement - Grant fund disbursement shall be dependent on grantees' satisfactory progress toward deliverables, and availability of continued funding.

The grant-awarding department shall award grants on a defined schedule, such as a state fiscal year basis (July 1 - June 30). The grant-awarding department shall require its grantees to expend or obligate all grant funds by the end of the fiscal year.

Grant funds shall be disbursed on a reimbursement basis, as stipulated in the grant agreement. In most instances, funds will be disbursed upon receipt of a request for payment and required progress, statistical and financial reports. If a grantee is unable to provide the services and programs without start-up funding, the grant agreement may allow for a percentage of funds, not to exceed 25% of the anticipated grant expenditure within a specific category (e.g., salaries), to be made available at the beginning of the project upon receipt of a request for payment. In such a case, subsequent funds would be disbursed through a drawdown schedule, upon receipt of a request for payment, and required progress, statistical and financial reports for the period of funding. If a drawdown schedule is used, the grant agreement shall specify that the grant-awarding department will withhold a percentage of the funds (a minimum of 10%) until it determines that all grant deliverables are complete, all reports are filed, and the grantee has expended or obligated the funds by the end of the fiscal year. The final request for a drawdown must result in a payment that does not exceed the actual expenditures made by the grantee or the amount of the grant.

- l. Grant Reporting Requirements - The grant-awarding department shall require its grantees to submit progress and financial reports at least semi-annually, with the exception of grants with a short grant period, such as equipment grants or mini-grants. The grant-awarding department shall develop formats for the reports and establish reporting schedules for its grantees. Requests for payment shall be developed in consultation with the Department of Budget and Finance. These formats shall be specified in written guidelines provided to potential grant applicants. The grant-awarding department shall advise its grantees in writing that failure to submit required reports and requests for payment on time may result in the Judiciary's denial of grant payments and future funding.

The grant-awarding department shall require its grantees to maintain documentation of compliance with the applicable written procurement policy for all single grant-related purchases in excess of \$2,500.00. The grant-awarding department shall not reimburse grantees or authorize payment for any expenditure that does not reflect compliance with the written procurement policy.

- m. Processing Grant Payments - The grant-awarding department shall review grantee expenditures on a regular basis to ensure they correspond with the approved project budget categories and reflect the required match, if any, and reconcile with the Department of Budget and Finance payment records.

The grant-awarding official shall approve the grantee's request for payment and submit it to the Accounts Payable Unit in the Department of Budget and Finance to initiate payment.

- n. Monitoring Grants - The grant-awarding department has the primary responsibility for the day-to-day monitoring of grants, assuring grant reporting requirements are met on a timely basis, making decisions to withhold funds when deliverables are not achieved within the established timeframes, and providing technical assistance to grantees.

The grant-awarding department shall establish an annual plan and schedule to ensure that it regularly monitors its grants. The plan may include both on- and off-site monitoring based on established priorities (e.g., the size of the grant award, the complexity of the project design, the grantee's past experience with Judiciary grants, etc.) The grant-awarding department shall notify grantees of the monitoring requirements prior to the award of the grant.

When necessary, the grant-awarding department may request additional review of a grantee's records by the Judiciary's Internal Audit Department, and/or the Judiciary Grants Coordinator.

Grantees must provide requested documents within the requested period of time. The grant-awarding department may also conduct evaluations of grant-funded projects to determine the benefits of the grant program.

2. Responsibilities of the Judiciary Grants Coordinator - The Judiciary Grants Coordinator shall:
  - Review and approve written grant guidelines issued by grant-awarding departments for: compliance with this policy, composition and functions of grant review committees, and drawdown or reimbursement payment schedules.
  - Serve as a non-voting member of all grant review committees established by grant-awarding departments.
  - Review grantee financial records for compliance with this policy and the grant-awarding department's guidelines and policies, when such review is deemed necessary.
  - Consult with grant-awarding departments when exceptions to the reimbursement-only grant fund disbursement policy are requested or under consideration.
  - Develop an annual plan to review grants made by the Judiciary to assure compliance with these policies. The review shall consist of review of any updated guidelines, review of the grant-making department's grant files, and reviews of grantee's files to assure compliance with these policies.
  - Request an audit by the Judiciary's Internal Audit Department or require a third-party audit of a grantee, when necessary.

## **IV. GRANTS RECEIVED BY THE JUDICIARY**

### **A. DEFINITIONS**

#### **1. Administrative Official**

- a. The Clerk of Court of the Circuit Court;

- b. Court Administrator
  - c. The Administrative Clerk or Administrative Commissioner of the District Court; or
  - d. The director of or designated staff within the Courts of Appeals, the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), District Court headquarters, or a court-related agency.
2. Applicant – The court, court-related agency, or Judiciary department seeking a grant.
  3. Budget – The categories and amounts requested and/or approved in a grant application.
  4. Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) – A database of all Federal programs available to State and local governments (including the District of Columbia); federally-recognized Indian tribal governments; territories (and possessions) of the United States; domestic public, quasi-public, and private profit and nonprofit organizations and institutions; specialized groups; and individuals.
  5. Department of Budget and Finance – The Department within the Judiciary responsible for recording grant funds, expenditures, and receipts; providing reports to the grantee for reconciliation; submitting budget modifications as necessary to the State Comptroller; and processing any refunds of unspent grant funds.
  6. DUNS (Data Universal Numeric System) Number - A unique nine-digit number recognized as the universal standard for identifying and tracking entities receiving Federal funds.
  7. Funding Period - The time period in which a grantee must obligate and/or expend grant funds.
  8. Grantee – The court, court-related agency, or department within the Judiciary that receives an external grant.
  9. Grantor – The agency or organization that awards a grant.
  10. Grants Received – Funding that the Maryland Judiciary receives from other funding sources (e.g., foundations, State and Federal agencies, etc.).
  11. Match – A portion of the costs of a project contributed by the grantee. Match may include cash and in-kind services. Cash match is the direct outlay of funds by the grantee or a third party to support the project. Examples of cash match include the dedication of funds to hire a new employee or purchase new

equipment to carry out the project. In-kind match consists of contributions of time and/or services of current staff members, space, supplies, etc., made to the project by the grantee or others working directly on the project.

12. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circulars - Instructions or information issued by OMB to Federal agencies. Most OMB circulars are available on line at [www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circular](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circular).
13. Unspent Grant Funds - Funds that were not spent within the funding period.

## **B. POLICY STATEMENT – GRANTS RECEIVED BY THE JUDICIARY**

This policy governs all external grants sought and received by the Judiciary. The Judiciary supports the efforts of courts, court-related agencies, and departments within the Administrative Office of the Courts to apply for external grants to support programs or events intended to enhance the basic operations of Maryland's court system, and enhance and evaluate the services available to its constituents.

### **1. Notification/Authorization**

- a. A court, court-related agency or department within the AOC must notify the Judiciary Grants Coordinator of its intent to apply for a grant.
- b. The Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals is the only individual who may authorize the submission of grant applications to outside agencies (e.g., foundations, Federal departments, other State agencies, etc.) and accept grants from such agencies on behalf of any department or court-related agency within the Judiciary, and for courts that intend to apply as the sole or principal grantee.
- c. The Judiciary Grants Coordinator is the only individual authorized to apply for a DUNS number for the Judiciary and electronically submit applications for Federal grants from the Judiciary through [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov). The Judiciary Grants Coordinator may delegate authorization to submit applications for ongoing Federal block grants to the requesting administrative official.

### **2. Responsibilities of the Applicant**

- a. Application Development - The applicant shall establish procedures to govern the development of grant applications that shall provide for:
  - An assessment of the applicant's capacity to administer a grant it may receive, in particular the availability of the staff and time commitments needed to fulfill the grant requirements;

- Prior authorization of the Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals to apply for funding, if required;
- Establishment of an application development schedule that allocates adequate time for:
  - Review of the application and proposed budget by the appropriate administrative official,
  - Review of the application by the Judiciary Grants Coordinator to ensure it complies with the Judiciary's policies and priorities;
  - Approval of the application by the Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals prior to submission, if required; and
  - If applying for a Federal grant, provision to the Judiciary Grants Coordinator of an electronic copy of the approved application for on-line submission via [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) at least five working days prior to the submission deadline;
- Provision of a copy of the final, approved application to the Judiciary Grants Coordinator.

b. Budget Requirements

- (1) Personnel and Payroll - Applicants shall follow the Judiciary's established personnel, payroll, and time and attendance policies for positions included in grant budgets. Grant-supported personnel shall be paid at a rate comparable to that of regular court staff members in comparable State-supported positions. (Circuit Courts shall follow their respective county's written policies.)
- (2) Procurement – applicants shall follow the Judiciary's procurement policies when acquiring equipment and services with grant funds. (Circuit Courts shall follow their respective county's written procurement policies.)
- (3) Matching Funds– Applicants shall ensure all matching funds required in the grant budget are requested through their Judiciary/Court budget or that current budget funds have been identified to meet this need.

d. Grant Awards

The grantee shall ensure that the Department of Budget and Finance receives copies of all grant awards and approved budget documents immediately upon receipt.

- (1) The Department of Budget and Finance shall assign a project code to identify and track the grant. The grantee shall be notified of this code and use it to identify all corresponding expenditures and payments.
- (2) As required for grant acceptance, the Department of Budget and Finance shall process budget amendments with the State to have funds included within the Judiciary budget.

The grantee shall ensure that the Judiciary Grants Coordinator receives copies of all grant awards, approved budget documents, and correspondence from the funding agency related to the award.

- d. Grant File – The official grant file for review by grantors, Legislative Auditors, and internal Judiciary auditors shall be maintained by the grantee for a time period of not less than three years.

e. Grant Reports

- (1) Progress and Statistical Reports – The grantee shall be responsible for compiling and submitting all reports required by the grantor. The grantee shall provide copies of all reports to the Judiciary Grants Coordinator and the Budget Analyst in the Budget Unit of the Department of Budget and Finance.
- (2) Financial Reports – The grantee shall be responsible for compiling and submitting all financial reports required by the grantor. The grantee shall provide a copy of the financial report, reimbursement claims, requests for funds, etc., submitted to the grantor, along with supporting documentation, to the Budget Analyst in the Budget Unit of the Department of Budget and Finance and the Judiciary Grants Coordinator.
  - (a) Grants from other State agencies – The grantee shall send the required financial reports, requests for funds, reimbursement claims, etc., directly to the grantor agency.
  - (b) Grants from Federal agencies – The grantee shall file the financial reports online with the Federal agency. Upon notification of the report's completion and acceptance, the

grantee shall request the Department of Budget and Finance to process the on-line request for/drawdown of funds.

Throughout the funding period and prior to submitting a final expenditure report and/or returning unspent grant funds, the grantee shall reconcile its own internal grant records with the Department of Budget and Finance's internal fiscal reports, which capture grant expenses and receipts. The Judiciary's fiscal records are the official records of the State and should always match grant records.

3. Responsibilities of the Judiciary Grants Coordinator - The Judiciary Grants Coordinator shall:
  - Consult with and assist applicants on the development of grant applications and reports;
  - Review drafts of applications for compliance with Judiciary policies and priorities;
  - Submit applications for Federal grants approved by the Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals; and
  - Maintain informational files on all external grants awarded to the Judiciary.

## **V. INTERPRETIVE AUTHORITY**

The Administrative Office of the Courts, Court Research and Development Department, in consultation with others as appropriate, is responsible for the interpretation of this policy.